



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES THE FILING OF “SEXTORTION” CHARGES AGAINST MAN WHO VICTIMIZED INDIANA TEENAGE GIRL

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, announced the filing of additional charges against Trevor J. Shea, 20, Mechanicsburg, Md., with respect to the sexual exploitation of children/production of child pornography. Hogsett asserted, “this is landmark case for Indiana not only because an Indiana teenager was victimized by “sextortion”, but also because nine other victims ranging in age from 13 to 16 from all over the country will seek justice in this prosecution. In addition, Mr. Shea demanded masochistic behavior from the victims. All of that will now end.”

While internet social networking is an invaluable tool for communicating with family and friends, it is also an avenue for predators to seek out and gain access to children in order to sexually exploit and terrorize them. Hogsett promised that, “this Office, along with our federal, state and local partners, will relentlessly continue to protect Hoosier children online, and to reach out and bring individuals trying to prey on Hoosier children to prosecution here in Indiana.”

A previous criminal complaint filed in federal district court alleges that in late September 2009, the Brownsburg Police Department received a complaint that “Jane Doe 1,” a Brownsburg 16 year old, was being “stalked” via the Internet. Jane Doe 1 and a family member reported that several months earlier, Jane Doe 1 and two other female minors used a computer with an internet connection to visit a webcam site where they exposed their breasts to unknown webcam viewers.

Approximately one week later, Jane Doe 1 began receiving emails and instant messages from an individual, now alleged to be Shea, threatening to post the webcam images, which he had captured of Jane Doe 1 and her friends. Shea told Jane Doe 1 that if she complied with his wishes for her to produce more images and/or webcam videos for him, he would not post her nude photos for others to see. Jane Doe 1 complied with some of these demands, and produced

images and videos of herself engaged in sexually explicit conduct. She then transferred them to him.

Working with the United States Postal Inspection Service as a federal law enforcement partner, the Brownsburg Police Department was able to trace the internet communications, and a federal search warrant was obtained and executed on Shea's Maryland home on March 4, 2010. Evidence was recovered during that search showing that numerous minor females around the country were victimized in a manner virtually identical to Jane Doe 1. Several of these other alleged victims have been identified. These allegations were formalized with the filing of a federal grand jury indictment in June, 2010. Shea made an initial appearance and was ordered to be placed on home detention with electronic monitoring.

Thereafter, on or about November 9, 2010, the Santa Rosa County (Florida) Sheriff's Department interviewed Jane Doe 2, a 16 year old residing in Pace, Florida. Jane Doe 2 reported that an individual, now alleged to be Shea, had been "blackmailing" her via the internet. Jane Doe 2 reported that she had been subjected to this kind of "blackmailing" the previous year, and that it was now occurring again. Jane Doe 2 reported that previously, in the summer of 2009, an individual had threatened her via her MySpace page, and that she had been coerced to produce nude images.

After the search of Shea's residence in early 2010, images of Jane Doe 2 were uncovered, but she had not yet been identified by law enforcement. Jane Doe 2 also reported that on November 8, 2010, Shea contacted Jane Doe 2 through her Facebook website page and inquired whether the person who had been blackmailing her the previous year had been caught. When Jane Doe 2 advised him that she didn't know, Shea allegedly told her to guess who was back, and proceeded to threaten her with dissemination of nude images he had previously obtained from her, and demanded new nude images. In response to this threat, Jane Doe 2 made videos and took several photographs that depicted her in the nude. Jane Doe 2 stated that on November 9, 2010, she e-mailed the videos and images to an e-mail address he provided.

Following Jane Doe 2's report in November 2010, it is alleged that an investigation determined that the email account to which Jane Doe 2 had been coerced to send the images and videos of herself was being accessed by an internet access point at Shea's residence. When it was discovered that Shea was on bond for the indictment filed in June 2010, Florida law enforcement coordinated with the Brownsburg Police Department and its federal law enforcement partners, and a federal search warrant was executed at Shea's residence on December 22, 2010. Shea was arrested again that day, and thereafter has remained in custody.

Following efforts to identify them, it is alleged that in addition to Jane Doe 2, three minor females residing in Kansas and Maryland were similarly victimized by Shea in November and December of 2010. Shea has been charged with the production of child pornography for each of these minor girls.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney A. Brant Cook, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Shea faces a maximum of 30 years in prison on each count, and a \$250,000 fine. “Investigators are increasingly seeing this kind of offense around the country,” stated Cook. “Children can be vulnerable to threats from unknown individuals who approach them online, and offenders are extorting teen, and even preteen, children to produce sexually explicit images.” Cook noted that this blackmailing of children to self-produce sexually explicit images is often referred to as “sextortion.”

An initial hearing will be scheduled in Indianapolis, before a U.S. Magistrate Judge.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. “This Office’s Project Safe Childhood initiative has long been regarded as being at the national forefront of the protection of our children and battling novel and highly sophisticated criminal activity,” Hogsett explained. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

An information is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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